

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELFARE

Voting Members:

Tommy Waters, Chair; Heidi Tsuneyoshi, Vice-Chair;
Carol Fukunaga, Joey Manahan, Ron Menor

Committee Meeting Held
February 27, 2020

Honorable Ikaika Anderson
Interim Chair, City Council
City and County of Honolulu

Mr. Chair:

Your Committee on Public Safety and Welfare, to which was referred Bill 14 (2020) entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO FIREFIGHTERS AND
EMERGENCY RESCUE OPERATIONS,"

introduced on February 13, 2020 and which passed first reading at the February 19, 2020 Council meeting, reports as follows:

The purpose of the Bill is to support the City's firefighters in the Honolulu Fire Department ("HFD") and their mission to save lives, especially those personnel assigned to emergency rescue operations on land and sea. The HFD protects the entire island of Oahu and its millions of residents and visitors, with approximately 1,100 career firefighters, assigned across over 60 companies island-wide. Currently, only two of those companies are designated and assigned personnel with the technical expertise necessary to safely and successfully execute emergency rescue operations. Protecting the public while protecting our firefighters is of paramount importance to the City, and it is imperative that these emergency rescue personnel are trained and remain qualified at the highest standards to enable them to perform the life-saving rescue work that they do every day.

CITY COUNCIL

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII

ADOPTED ON MAY 20 2020

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 105

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Fire Chief Manuel Neves of the HFD testified in opposition to the Bill and stated that the Fire Chief should have the ability and discretion to manage the HFD and its firefighters. The Fire Chief indicated that the HFD has identified a gap in rescue service on the Windward side of Oahu, as part of its accreditation process. After receiving budgetary funding in prior fiscal years for additional equipment and personnel positions, the Fire Chief indicated that the HFD hoped to increase public safety by bringing online a third rescue company by mid-summer, 2020. Fire Chief Neves was also joined by Deputy Fire Chief Lionel E. Camara, Jr., Assistant Fire Chief Scott Lawton, and Battalion Fire Chief R. Fukuda.

At your Committee's meeting on February 27, 2020, Robert Lee, on behalf of the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association, Local 1463, and 6 HFD firefighters, all of whom are Fire Captains assigned to the HFD's two rescue companies, testified in support of the Bill.

All individuals that testified in support of the Bill indicated that they were concerned with the adequacy of training for rescue company firefighters, and they expressed concern about creating a third rescue company prior to having enough firefighters with sufficient training as well as adequate and competent staffing for relief positions on the HFD's existing two rescue companies. All six Fire Captains supported the suggestion that at least five core qualifications be established as requisite standards for any firefighter to be eligible for assignment to a rescue company within the HFD.

Fire Chief Neves acknowledged that the HFD needed to better communicate with its Fire Captains assigned to its two rescue companies, and he indicated that additional conversations would be had to address and attempt to resolve their concerns.

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Your Committee received written testimony in support of the Bill from the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association, Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO, and 10 individuals. No written testimony in opposition to or comment on the Bill was received.

Your Committee on Public Safety and Welfare is in accord with the intent and purpose of Bill 14 (2020) and recommends that it pass Second Reading, be scheduled for public hearing, and be referred back to Committee. (Ayes: Fukunaga, Manahan, Menor, Tsuneyoshi, Waters – 5; Noes: None.)

Respectfully submitted,



Committee Chair

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII

ADOPTED ON **MAY 20 2020**

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. **105**